



# Ilia Takes Center Stage

By Rebecca Patrick

NEW YORK, NY – It was an exciting evening for Ilia Kulik as he attended the May 7<sup>th</sup> premiere of "Center Stage," the feature film marking his acting debut.

Equally excited were the Krew members on hand who lined the red carpet to show their support and, through Kulik's generosity, were able to watch the movie with the cast and other invited guests.

The premiere, held at the AMC Empire Theater in New York City, was the first time Kulik had seen the film. "I loved it... thought it was great! I purposely hadn't seen the movie before because I wanted to get the full impression tonight," he said. Kulik, who attended the event with his younger sister, Svetlana, added that his parents had already seen the film at a screening in Los Angeles and "absolutely loved the movie."

"Center Stage" chronicles the struggles and triumphs of a group

of tight-knit dance students at a prestigious ballet academy. The movie stars Peter Gallagher along with a cast of real-life dancers from ballet companies in New York and California, including Ethan Stiefel, Amanda Schull and Sascha Radetsky.

Kulik, who worked on the film last summer during time off from his skating commitments, felt good about his portrayal of "Sergei," a principal dancer who desperately misses his ballerina girlfriend. Ironically, he had to thicken his Russian accent for the role because he speaks English so well.

Kulik's character provides much of the comic relief in the movie. One such scene was at a nightclub where "Sergei" flirts with various women, but is rebuffed until he pretends to be a Russian Mafioso. The scene culminates with "Sergei" dancing a rather unique salsa with one lucky lady. "That was my absolute favorite and the most fun I ever had," laughed Kulik. This scene was surely a favorite among the Krew as well. He added that, while this salsa scene is just minutes long, "it took five hours to shoot!"

Besides the salsa, Kulik didn't do too much dancing. "For the ballet scenes, I basically did the opening positions, that's it. You can probably tell the difference between me and the real dancers in the cast," he admitted. "I never had a chance to watch the dancers perform during

filming, so tonight was the first time. Wow, they are amazing," he said. He expressed a great feeling of camaraderie among the cast and was glad to see them again.

Kulik also attended the reception for the movie company, cast and their guests, which was held immediately following the premiere at the elegant Hammerstein Ballroom in lower Manhattan. Celebrities attending included Roma Downey of "Touched By An Angel" and Craig Bierko of Broadway's hit revival "The Music Man."

Kulik hopes that "Center Stage" is just the beginning of his acting career and is eager to explore additional opportunities. "Right now I have some time for auditions and already have a few things lined up," he revealed. But fans of his skating are still in luck. Skating remains Kulik's top priority and said he plans on returning to Stars on Ice for its 2000-2001 season and will spend this summer "trying to come up with something different and new for the coming season."

*Rebecca Patrick is a professional journalist and photographer and a member of Kulik's Krew.*

## Krew's Presses Finally Roll

After several starts...and stops...your first Krew Newsletter has finally arrived. All of our editions will feature our Iliushka; this inaugural issue focuses on Ilia and his Krew. So you will be reading about some of your fellow Krew members – who they are and why the Krew, and Ilia, are important to them.

We're grateful to everyone who pitched in to write, edit, do layout – none of us planned on this project but all were generous with their time and talent. Becky, Ken, Sergei, Denise, Kara, Joyce, and Laurie – I can't thank each of you enough for being there. A salute to our printer Courtney Nelthropp and graphics wiz Jamie Russo who understand that the Krew is about love not money, and help us in so many ways. Special thanks to Madley who managed to fit her contributions into her busy schedule – between 1:00 and 3:00 in the morning!

Our next issue, "Ilia on Ice," reviews the 1999-2000 skating season and previews 2001. If you have an idea for a contribution to "Ilia on Ice," please contact me as soon as you can – we need everyone's talent. With your help, we'll keep on rollin'.

Editorially,  
Nancy



Rebecca Patrick

Ilia and his sister, Svetlana, attend the "Center Stage" premiere

# Another Man From Moscow

## A Krew Member Shares His Story

By Sergei Kogut

BROOKLYN, NY – I was born in Moscow in 1977 and came to America in 1996. In Russia, I was a violinist at the Moscow Conservatory and, in order to get to that point, I had to shut myself off from most of the world. The name “Ilia Kulik” was not really a household name for me, my family or my friends. The first time I heard his name was in America from my wife who signed me up as an Associate Member. The Krew did not have much meaning for me at first, but then I realized its importance. The Krew gives Ilia support, something which most people need but do not usually have.

I left my family at the age of 19 with the hope of finding a better life. I arrived in America, and an apartment that I shared with seven other Russian men became my home away from home. The first thing I did when I arrived was audition for all of New York’s top conservatories. While I was accepted to all, none of them gave out full scholarships and I was not eligible for federal help. I had no money and took on plenty of odd jobs, leaving no time for practicing violin. I could not go back to my old teacher in Moscow because he was very offended that I had left him. My violin rarely came out of its case and I often thought about selling it. It was only when I met my wife, Rosalia, an accomplished pianist and pairs skater, that I remembered the importance of music in my life.

Ilia Kulik is an amazing skater who has worked hard to achieve his Olympic Gold and more. Life in Moscow was difficult but he succeeded in overcoming the obstacles that the breakdown of the Soviet Union might have placed in his way, and he continues to succeed in America. I still do not understand what the difference is between a Flip and a Lutz (and a Flutz?), but all of those things are irrelevant when watching Ilia skate. Ilia is a skater that anyone can watch and enjoy because of his overall enthusiasm, athleticism and artistry.



Courtesy: The Koguts

Sergei and Rosalia  
A duet for violin and piano

Ilia Kulik is very lucky to have the Krew’s support. The Krew is how I participate, along with the other members, in giving Ilia as much encouragement as possible in both his professional figure skating and budding acting careers. I understand how very difficult it is to step into a new world without any friendly and caring faces surrounding you. It was wonderful to meet some of the Krew members at the “Center Stage” premiere and see how happy they are to watch Ilia prosper in life. He can be assured that he will never be alone; the Krew will always be there.

*Sergei Kogut is a freelance violinist from the Moscow Conservatory of Music and lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Rosalia.*



Eda Tseinyev

## Remember Marlborough?

### SUMMER CONTEST Ilia, The Krew, Haiku and You

Sitting at home counting the days until a new Ilia program? Pick up a pencil, be creative and get your feelings about our favorite skater on paper!

#### WHAT IS A HAIKU? (pronounced *hi-ku*)

An unrhymed verse form of Japanese origin having three lines containing 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively. An example:

A fallen snowflake;  
The first tiny stitch in a  
glistening blanket.

But your topic is Ilia –  
anything about Ilia that inspires  
or moves you.

#### Entry Rules:

1. All Full and Associate Members are eligible to enter.
2. One (1) entry per member – no exceptions.
3. No profanity or gossip allowed.
4. Entries can be either e-mailed to [contest@kuliks-krew.com](mailto:contest@kuliks-krew.com) or snail-mailed to the Krew post box:  
Kulik’s Krew Haiku Contest  
P.O. Box 3803  
Burbank, CA 91508-3803  
USA
5. Deadline for entries: Postmarked by August 10, 2000. The winners will be announced August 24, 2000.

#### Judging:

All entries will be judged anonymously by our membership – given a code and posted on the website starting August 10 for all to read. Members will be asked to select their three (3) favorites, deciding our winners.

#### Grand Prize

- One (1) Year Paid Basic Membership to Kulik’s Krew, plus
- One (1) autographed Ilia photo

#### Second & Third Prize

- One (1) autographed Ilia photo each

After the contest, all entries (with poet’s name) will be made into a book and presented to Ilia on August 30, 2000 to commemorate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the signing of “Kulik’s Krew” as his official fan club.

Looking forward to your haikus!

Joyce Watson  
Contest Administrator

## The Krew Goes to Russia?

Restaurant Review  
By Kara Thompson

After attending the premiere of "Center Stage" in New York, some of the Krew, old faces and new, went to **Moscow...** the restaurant!

You can't miss the floor to ceiling marble statue in the middle of the bar room or the deep velvet room behind swinging wooden doors. Then up a marble stairway – with a marble railing to boot – to the second floor – white linens, velvet covered chairs with gold emblems and candlelight.

We were entertained with live music both in Russian and English. The waiter was cute with a Russian accent, but not as cute as our golden boy!

The menu had a choice of various Russian dishes, prices ranging from \$10 to \$30. It's easy to spend \$50 on a meal, but how often do you have a chance to dine at a Russian restaurant recommended by Ilia Kulik? So I say splurge!

The food was wonderful. The best part of dinner was dessert (\$10 or so). Fair warning: when you don't see a price or you are not shown a menu, chances are you will be paying quite a bit more for an item. I had the best ice cream that I've ever tasted and every spoonful was worth the price – even though it wasn't mine (Sorry, Mom.).

A wonderful meal, a wonderful evening!

*Kara Thompson, a customer service representative at First Union National Bank, in Roanoke, Virginia, is a member of Kulik's Krew and the daughter of BOT Member Andrea Thompson.*

### SEEKING ILIA-FOCUSED WRITING TALENT

Interested in an all-work, no-pay, totally-Ilia "career" in skating journalism? Contact:

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Kulik's Krew Newsletter  
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# Kweenie and the Krew

## Where It All Began

By Denise "Kweenie" Rokosky

MAR LIN, PA – After a few years of simply admiring Ilia Kulik's skating, I was completely won over by him at the Olympics in Nagano. I was curious about this young man, so I searched the Internet for information and ended up at Shin Yi's "Romeo of Figure Skating" page.

I was cautious and just lurked for a while. But once I saw how everyone was trading information and rapidly becoming friends, I jumped in. At Delphi.com, we also got a chat room and that's where the idea for the Krew was born.

We decided to get Ilia presents for his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (May 23). I can't recall whose idea it was, but we all thought it was a great one. But we also needed a name for our little group. So after tossing a few names around with Lori E. one day, we decided on **KULIK'S KREW** – and everyone agreed that was "it."

We all felt a sweatshirt with our names and locations

embroidered on the back would be a great way to let Ilia know that his fans came from all over the world. As a matter of fact, so many people wanted to be involved in the birthday gift, I received enough money to get Ilia

Cara K. in Orlando, Florida agreed to give Ilia his gifts backstage at "Champions on Ice" on his actual birthday and we found a TV station interested in covering the event. Yes, we were on TV in Florida and our birthday presentation was even mentioned in "Blades on Ice."

"Project Birthday" earned me the title of "Kweenie" – a name I use proudly since it was given to me by my fellow Krew members. I never imagined that we would grow from a group of roughly 50 fans to the over 190 members now on our roster – and we're still growing. I have enjoyed every minute of being here, made some wonderful friends and will always be pleased to be a founding member of what is now Ilia Kulik's OFFICIAL Fan Club!

*Denise "Kweenie" Rokosky is married, the mother of two sons and a daughter and owned by a calico cat named Patches. As far as the Krew goes, she is Member #1.*



Elli, Sherrie, lucky Qian, Ilia, Nancy and Denise at the 1999 NYC brunch

even more presents! We ended up with the sweatshirt with "Kulik's Krew, Fans Forever" embroidered on the front, another long sleeve shirt, an engraved key chain and a phone card for him to call home (Russia then). "Project Birthday" went into high gear.

# A New Member Meets Us All

By Laurie Asseo

WASHINGTON, DC – As a new Krew member, I didn't know what to expect at the NYC Konvention in March, but I was pretty sure of one thing – at the lunch with Ilia, I probably would be seated at the back of the room and might not ever get close enough to speak with him.

So I was truly amazed when I arrived, found my place at the table and spotted Ilia's name card right across from mine! The Krew leaders had given me the best spot in the room. I was stunned, but Nancy Hall told me the idea is to give new members the closest access to Ilia because the others had met him before.

The whole day was like that. The Krew members greeted me like an old friend and instantly made me part of the group. Krew members have a great sense of fun, and I know I would enjoy

hanging out with them even if we didn't have Ilia in common. We laughed all day long.

The highlight, of course, was meeting Ilia for the first time. He is as fascinating and charis-



Ilia meets his new Krew member Laurie

matic up close as he is on television. He has a gentle, quiet manner, yet somehow he commands your attention. Ilia talked with us about skating, his career, the movie, and even the time a mouse

wandered out onto the ice at Madison Square Garden in 1998. He seemed very much at ease during the autographing and photo-taking – even when my camera balked, he waited until it was ready and then gave me the best picture of the day. It is clear that Ilia likes and appreciates his Krew.

That night at Madison Square Garden, it was great to sit with the Krew, cheer for Ilia and help Junko wave her terrific banner. We yelled for him as loudly as we could, and I'm pretty sure that after his Blues number, he looked up and acknowledged us. It's so much more fun to yell with the group than by yourself! It's great fun to be a Krew member.

*Laurie Asseo, a journalist in Washington D.C., used to think she was too grown-up to be a Krew member. Fortunately, she loosened up and joined the fun!*

## Ilia's Journal

# Movie Magic

I hope you all got a chance to see "Center Stage" by now! I saw the movie at the premiere. Once, I'm gonna get the tape – or the DVD, with the little something extra.

## Dear Krew Dear Krew

My favorite thing about making the movie was when I was having a big scene – where you can really talk and try to get into connection with actors because I didn't have that many scenes with the words. It was to experiment with real acting. In the salsa club, it was a lot of moving and dancing but not that much with the words...so the most satisfying moments were when I had a scene and had the connection with the other actor. You're really getting into the mood and you really feel that this is the right, exactly right moment to say, and exactly the right thing to think about...it was like magic. And I felt it for a couple of seconds.

Unfortunately, there were a couple of pretty big scenes that they cut off. There was even one serious scene which I liked a lot. I didn't really see it, but it felt really good. And Nick, the director, was really happy about that. Really happy. It was such a waste. It was a scene with Zoë because originally in the script she's supposed to have a brother. They completely cut the guy out. He was in the movie, he was two months shooting with us there, then he's coming and they just cut him completely. He was there in the movie maybe for five seconds somewhere in the beginning. Do you remember the guy who was looking in the class? So he was there through whole the movie, they just completely cut him off. He was on the boat but they really couldn't cut that out. Actually in that script he's dying. I was kind of in charge getting him into the limo company of my brother because he doesn't have a job, so I get him a job with my brother and now he's driving this limo. He's a little bit crazy guy, he's reckless – and so he died. And I'm coming to Zoë – "Eva" – just to let her know that he's dead. And it was serious scene for me and it was actually well played too because Zoë, she was good, and I felt really on the money. And there was another scene when I'm getting a phone call from my brother saying that he's dead – there was a whole different story. They couldn't probably fit it in the movie because it was already two hours.

**Another fun night was the salsa club**, it was so good. It felt so right, it felt so free and so...it felt good. It was half me and half "Sergei." It was funny. And there's supposed to be back flip – but they cut it out. We were shooting it for half-hour, I was jumping like crazy with the whole dance because in that scene you can probably see me for ten seconds. But it was a whole two-minute dancing routine, and we were going through whole routine for the whole two minutes and then on the end I had this back flip. Every time I was going through for two minutes I was so tired – I was

just dead. And then I was barely making it and they said "We're done" like five or six times! They were trying to get the camera and the angle – and then on the end they said, "Okay, you don't have to do the whole dance, just get some ten seconds before that and do the back flip" – so I've done it. Actually there's supposed to be a dip, she's supposed to try to kiss me then I'm falling on the floor – and I'm doing this hip-hop – and then I'm going for the back flip. It was the coolest thing. They were happy with the shot – and I saw the shot, it was pretty good. Then it didn't make the movie. Such a waste.

What I learned the most from being there – patience! I cannot say that I learned it completely because I was just amazed at how slow the process was. It was killing me. I was shocked. Nothing was so slow in my entire life. It's not really a problem about how long it takes, I can understand that it takes a long time, but nobody seems to care about your schedule. If you think it through, if you'll think really what time you gotta be there, real time, you can make it work. But I know exactly that they don't need me there at nine. They say nine and they have three scenes before me and you know it's gonna be five p.m., and you're doing everything just to be just a little bit late! If you're running one hour late it's not a problem, nobody even notices you're not there because there's so many things going on and so many people running around – it's real hard to care about everybody's schedule. Probably for the leading roles they have special people who are taking care of schedules, but it's difficult because there's so many things going on. Especially in New York, those busy streets...

## What I learned the most from being there -- patience

My first day on the movie was when we find out who was cast in the ballets. And it was so funny because I was supposed to fly from New York to L.A. on that very day because I had the Snapple clinic in L.A. We're supposed to finish the shoot like around five o'clock and I had a plane at 6:30 out of JFK, which is almost impossible to catch. The deal was that we're shooting the scene – and it was just this little thing and that's it. They weren't using me at all, just this little thing – from the elevator to there, turn left – then you go. And there was a lot of troubles trying to make those people let me go for the weekend because it as Saturday and I was supposed to be on Sunday in LA and go back Monday to shoot again.

So, **it was the first day** when I'm working with Nick Hytner and the crew and everybody. Then we finish this thing, and Nick is improvising a little – he's the director, he goes improvising, so you go there and you go there...okay, you check your schedule and now you go. And I was stuck

Rebecca Patrick



somewhere...I don't know, I just went somewhere and he said, "Oh, okay, you go here and now, you know what? Go here and now, you know what? Maureen coming here and you gotta — you gotta talk to her right here..." And I'm saying, like it's not in the script and he says, "Yeah, yeah, I know, we're gonna make another scene from here, it looks good here." So then I understand that I'm gonna be stuck here for two hours and I have a plane to catch in like about an hour — I'm so embarrassed because he's asking me to do some more work and it's the first day and I'm supposed to say no to the director on the first day? I was so embarrassed but I said, "I gotta fly, you know, I got a plane..." and it was dead silence on the set and everybody looking, "Who he thinks he is?" So they said, "Okay, take off!" And I barely made my plane, but I did. Barely.

The other fun day was the sponge fight — that was so much fun! It was really dangerous. I was pretty safe but the other guys, Sasha and Shakiem, were all over the place because it was so slippery on the ballet floor...they almost killed the shot because they fell so bad and it was so funny! We were dying, but they didn't

put it in. Actually this scene felt pretty good too, when I watched on screen it felt really good, I was really happy.

But the scene where I'm saying, "I am your slave..." You know what? That one felt pretty...pretty stupid. It was funny, though, on the end — because actually it felt a little bit wrong the way it was in the script, but finally, I was pretty happy. That was actually one thing I was worrying about too much when I came to the premiere because it just didn't feel good. The whole idea of this little scene — in class you gotta scream something out loud — it doesn't make any real sense, at least not for me. I don't know how's the ballet classes in America goes, but in Russia you barely can whisper something, you just gotta fly out of class, it was that strict. So then it just didn't make too much sense for me but it went well. It went okay.

**I certainly liked the whole experience,** if you throw out all the downsides like just waiting around...but the whole thing, I liked it a lot. And the idea of the movie and trying to create a character and work on it. It wasn't that big of a part to really work on it so I was kind of suffering because of that...you really got the role but there's not that much to work on. And I wish I could put a little more on it, but they didn't need a little more, they need less. It's not a lot of pressure but it's something to try, and there was some room to really improvise a little because, as I noted from this movie, it's all about improvising. They're not saying what to do at all, they just got you on the set, they got you on the position and you gotta get with something...before your lines, you gotta get some actions, you gotta get some energy going and it's all up to you. If you're not making it, nobody else will make it and everybody was pretty shy, you know? And you're sit-

ting, four dancers and me and there's no energy and everybody can feel it and nobody knows what to do. And they're saying "keep your energy up" but what does it mean? To a dancer it means dance...but that's why it felt good because it's something that you're dealing with and that's great.

Of course, **I would certainly want some more work.** I've had some auditions recently — nothing major, just some TV stuff. They're not giving answers right away so we'll see what's gonna happen with schedules and stuff too. And I'm taking class now when I'm not that busy.

Some people ask me about theater — I never really thought of it because you've got to put a lot of time in it. It's not like one performance, you really got to work on the part because it's a live performance. You cannot just go and do it, you gotta really, really get into it. Yes, certainly, it's fun — I think it's really challenging because all my life I'm doing live performances and that's something I know a little bit how to deal with



Rebecca Patrick

## Ilia with the Center Stage crew (with a "c") in New York

ing. But that's why I like movies too, because there's so many takes and there is so much room to try to do something and there's not that much stuff to memorize in one scene. People have a lot more respect for movies than for theater, but the work in theater is 100 times more and it's like...I don't know even what to compare it with, but theater is so much more serious, so much more challenging and so much more...two levels higher than the movies. Anybody can shoot the movie, any first timer — like me or any ballet dancers — anybody can and they can make it look good, but in theater — you just cannot go and do it.

But I did go to the "Gladiator" premiere here in L.A. — and I was actually impressed. I liked the movie a lot. I actually love all the historical stuff, it's great. And you really feel like you're there, you really feel that you know how was it at that time. It's an amazing film. It's very good, although "You have to win the crowd" — that's a little bit more Americanized. I don't think they were caring about that, they were caring just to stay alive a little bit longer. And I don't think anybody cared about who was that good that they can really care about audience stuff — you only care about your opponent. You gotta be a hundred times better than he is so you'll get so relaxed and care about audience. But it's entertaining!

Movie trailer prisoner '99~Ilia Kulik,

June 2, 2000  
Los Angeles

# From Skater to Skater

## A Unique Point of View

By Ken Gillette

MADISON, WI – Not only am I a huge fan of Ilia Kulik, but I am a figure skater myself. The moment I first saw him skate, I knew that he would have a tremendous influence on my own skating. From his exciting, fast footwork to his huge, gorgeous jumps, Ilia's skating is superb.

All skaters have had their ups and downs, especially with many technical elements. Sometimes you have it, sometimes you don't. In the down times, you rely on your coaches, other skaters, textbooks and video clips. But ultimately, only painstaking practice can fix any of it.

Looking back, I can remember so many times where I just wanted to give up. One week I would have my triple loop, the next week even doubles seemed impossible. I remember the first time I e-

mailed Ilia, I added a small question about my problems with my loop jump and how watching him do loop jumps has helped me dramatically. The particular way Ilia did his take off for the loop jump was great, and it clicked when I watched him do a triple loop in slow motion. When I took the ice next, I used Ilia's "technique" and voila! I landed it. Of course, I e-mailed him thanking him and told him, "I found the secret!" He replied, "So, what was the secret? Tell me...I will tell you my secrets for loop...Ilia"

It was great. Whenever I had problems with my skating I would seek out advice from Ilia and he would always be sure to give me a little pointer or two.

The times I've had a chance to meet Ilia, we always end up talking about skating...go figure! When I was first learning a triple axel, I had so many problems – most of all fear. When I met Ilia at the Milwaukee "Stars On Ice" I asked him for some help. It was terrific. He gave me advice and a little coaching. But the biggest help was when he told me to practice my jumps on the floor.

My coach rarely told me to do this, but I figured I should try it. I told my coach and he was all up for it. So I proceeded to try and do axels on the floor. There was literally no fear of attempting a jump on the floor so I put my all into it. After doing doubles and finally completing the triple on the floor, I took it to the ice. I have to admit I was still a little frightened, but from landing it on the floor so many times, my confidence was boosted to new levels. I didn't land the first or the second, but the third attempt was gorgeous. Without Ilia's "tip," my triple axel would have taken a much longer time to master.

The other times I've talked with Ilia were backstage at SOI shows and he always asked how my figure skating was coming – really cool of him. One special moment was during the NYC 2000 Krew Konvention. I had a competition that weekend and I was having so many problems with my triple axel. I couldn't figure it out. Was it my takeoff? My arms? Not enough speed?

Sitting next to Ilia at the Krew lunch, I brought it up. Of course, Ilia helped me out! He told me that I was probably using my leg wrong. I was like... duh, that makes sense. If we had more time, I'm sure we would have been doing triple axels in the restaurant (low ceiling, darn) but I'll be sure to try it next time!

As you can see, Ilia has had a tremendous effect on the technical elements of my skating, but he has also had an influence on the artistic elements of my skating. I could go on forever about how his skating has helped me. But to be brief, I'd like to close with a great big THANK YOU to the awesome Ilia Kulik! Spasiba Balshoye Ilia!

*Ken Gillette, a student at the University of Wisconsin, is a member of the US-FSA Senior Team B and Kulik's Krew.*



Courtesy: Ken Gillette

Ilia gives Ken some serious advice about his triple axel...  
Next year we go for higher ceilings!

# Eggs Benedict with Ilia

OR Planning A Big Event for Someone You Hardly Know

By Nancy Hall



BRIARCLIFF MANOR, NY – August, 1998. I thought it wouldn't be more complicated than having some friends in for dessert and drinks. So when Daphne said she needed help planning the Marlborough party I said sure, I've done these things for years. Sure? Wait a minute - where's Marlborough? I used to

live in Boston and I remember something about a little town in the western suburbs, but where? And what's there? In my kitchen, I know what's where – what's easy for 4 or 8 or 10 but oh gosh, where's Marlborough? Okay, I found it, it is on the map and I'm driving up there on a Saturday to see what's what and what's where – 3 hours up, 3 hours back and in the middle figure out where we're staying, where we're partying, what we're eating and what it costs! Leave early, drink lots of coffee, don't get lost! Good heavens, I've never even met Ilia – how do I know what to order? Okay, chocolate, everybody likes chocolate, right? Please God, don't let him be allergic to chocolate! Thank you...make a note - he likes chocolate, I like him.

January, 1999. I didn't just say 'yes' this time, I volunteered first! And then I volunteered Sherrie who's such a good sport! Am I nuts? Is she? And now it's not dessert, it's brunch. The chocolate mousse cake was fine with Ilia at Marlborough but you can't have that for brunch. Can you? Maybe he'd like chocolate mousse cake for brunch. Get real. Meet Sherrie in midtown on Saturday and by the end of the day you two will have it nailed. "SHERRIE! I am so glad you're here. I caused an accident on the West Side Highway and I think I totaled some guy's Saab and, yes, we can start at the Millennium Hotel, they're expecting us." If you walk in the snow in NYC long enough, a miracle is bound to happen, and it did - the Bryant Park Grill. I love the Bryant Park Grill so why didn't I think of this before I wrecked my car? Okay, no chocolate, no cake...uhm...Eggs Benedict – everybody likes Eggs Benedict, right? The front of my car is in pieces, my nerves are in pieces, but Ilia was a prince...who likes eggs. Make a note - not allergic to eggs or Hollandaise sauce, is a prince.

February, 2000. One more time and I'm fixated on blini – Petrossian, the Russian Tea Room, back to Petrossian, on the phone with the Tea Room, again...and again. Hey guys, I really like blini, I loved my grandmother's blini, a lot, but \$45 – way too many rubles! Okay, don't panic, there's always an answer. Come on, this is New York, there are only 2 million restaurants – you haven't even started to look, so save Saturday. How did poor Sherrie get roped into trudging around town with me again this year, she isn't even planning this thing – whatta friend. We found it, Trattoria dell'Arte. I'll go back next week and see if they're still as nice. They are as nice, I'm sure this will be fine. I am sure. Am I? Madley, let's go over the menu for the thirtieth time. I know you're tired, one more time, pleeeeeease. And Madley, just checking but do you think Ilia could be allergic to.....Make a note – how many Saturdays until next year's? Wouldn't miss it for the world.

*Nancy Hall is Director of Marketing for international services at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, the very proud mom of Gabriel and Nicholas, and the Treasurer of Kulik's Krew.*



A special morning at Rockefeller Center  
"We Love You Ilia" - an inspiration becomes our anthem

# Ask ? Ilia

From **Val (Valushka)**: As we talk about Olympics...If not too personal, I always wanted to know what you mumbled on the podium just at the end of the Russian anthem? What were your thoughts at that moment?

**Ilia**: What I mumbled – it is too personal. But the thoughts...I was completely disconnected. Switched off. But about mumbling...it is too personal to say. I cannot say I remember exactly. I was completely turned off.

And...another very personal question...Do you believe in God? Take care, Val :)

**Ilia**: You know, it's too much of a theme to talk about. It's hard to answer yes or no, such a topic, you know...you just cannot answer yes or no in one straight answer. I'm trying to figure it out, let's say it this way.

From **Sarah Booker (Sarah65)**: What were your thoughts as you realized that you had won the Gold Medal and of what had happened to Elvis! Do you think that he made the right decision to go and skate injured?

**Ilia**: Better ask him, you know? I think you prepare for that your whole life long – you can get yourself together through the pain. If you manage to make it till there...so you better go and give it a try, give it a chance. It's a good thing that he didn't really pull it to the really bad condition. This is the only downside you can expect if you completely pull it out, your muscle – you can injure it so much more, but you know, what do you need that muscle for if not the Olympics in four years, so you gotta give it a try! So I think he did the right thing.

From **Val (Valushka)**: Two more questions – As you talk about being healthy in your last journal, do you still fear back problems or is it completely healed by now? Do you still think about it when you practice back flips and lifts?

**Ilia**: There's no problems with the back flips and the lifts. When I'm starting to jump more...but I wasn't jumping that hard this season at all. So triples and triple axel looks good, feels good, feels fine. But there's some certain moves, some certain positions that sometimes I'm feeling something there, but it's not that bad, not bothering me at all.

Do you still follow amateur competitions results? Do you sometimes watch some on TV? Thanks for taking time to answer. :)

**Ilia**: Yeah, I'm trying to catch everything that I possibly can, but you know...we're on tour all the time while everything's going on so it's hard to keep track of it. But you know, if I wouldn't be on tour, I probably even would go to the competition and just watch it live because it's exciting.



Madley Katarungan

The Krew's birthday gift of a director's chair was just the right fit.

From **Teri (Tsilver)**: Hello, Ilia. My name is Teri. Has the change in your life...to California from Massachusetts, and the change of coach from Tarasova to ???? influenced your decision on how to proceed with your career? Also, are you still using your quad jump (if so, how frequently) and will your new competitive programs be very different athletically, musically and artistically from previous ones?



Laurie Asseo

**Ilia**: I'm trying to make it different, you know, because I hate doing the same stuff. I'm not really doing the same stuff – I'm trying to make it with the time, you know, not behind the time but with the time...in this time period. (Pushing the envelope) – yeah, that's what I'm trying to do. If you're not practicing your jumps that hard because when you're amateur you're spending all your time on your jumps and techniques and there's no time to push anything except your jumps forward. So you're just caring about your techniques, you're not really into all the dance styles and you're not trying to try anything new, any movements because everything start hurting, all your muscles start hurting if you're trying something new. But you'll only be fresh for your jumps, you know, that's what it's all about in amateurs.

In pros, it's different. If I turned pro, I'm really trying to go this professional way, not doing the same thing that I was doing in amateurs but on a lower level so I'm not trying to make it easy for myself. I'm trying to make it the same part but in a different direction. And it's good, it's great to bring everything into it from different fields. You gotta take something from somewhere to make something up from it and go forward, you know? You cannot just watch yourself and try to do something new out of it. You're stuck. You gotta bring all the information in order to create something new.

From **Erica (Mrewing)**: Hi, Ilia. All of your programs seem to push the envelope for you artistically. Many skaters from other countries have hard times catering towards the western audiences. Although, your transition seemed to happen without any flaws. To be honest with you, I never thought that I would see a skater use hip-hop music and keep the dancing part of it so authentic. Is your selection of music and routines a conscious effort on your part, or is it part of your personality and interests to pick music from so many different genres? Did you receive any criticism for departing from the classical style of skating and music. Good luck with the rest of the tour. :-)

Erica

**Ilia**: Actually, I like so many things in the dancing world, so it doesn't make any sense to be stuck with something like classical, or only hip-hop or only tango. I'm enjoying it, doing it and watching everything so I'm certainly enjoying doing everything and I'm enjoying trying everything...So understand that I can do anything and that's why I'm trying different stuff and this is just interesting for me. And I'm certainly not getting any criticism because I'm still able to do the classical stuff too. I'm not getting any criticism from hip-hop guys because I can do hip-hop too. You know, it's whatever's turning me on for this moment, that's what I'm trying to find the style...this is how I make my moves happen. If something turns me on, the moves just come – coming out of me if I'm excited about it for this moment.

From **Erica (Mrewing)**: Ilia, in your SOI profile it said that your studied at the Academy of Physical Culture in Moscow. Is this something that is required for all athletes to strive for, or was it one of your goals to focus on higher education while training for the Olympics?

**Ilia**: You know, the word "studying" has got to be in quotes! It's hard to study somewhere when you're a skater. If you're practicing twice a day

and you gotta have a little rest in between and you really don't have any energy today and you have something else, you can't really do some homework and stuff – but I would not really call it studying, serious studying. And it's really interesting...I was studying coaching and stuff, but you know, I know pretty much a lot about coaching because of my career. Maybe one day I'll even be a coach because I'm really enjoying it, and really enjoying seeing that people can do something because I properly lead them there...it's such a great feeling also. But I'm also a little disappointed that I couldn't really study that hard at that academy because there was so much knowledge in there, you know? But I got some (knowledge) and I'm happy with that. And you know, you can study all your life long and it will not be enough...it's never enough. You have to do a balance between actually doing it and studying it.

From [Mavi \(Admin\)](#): Ilia, last year's "Stars on Ice" programs Jumpin' Jack, Tango and Noise were very geared towards reaching and involving the audience (especially Noise). This year, Baseball Cap and Blues are more introverted. Why the change? Is it just the different piece of music? Or did you think audience interplay did not work for you? I loved Noise – it is one of my favorite programs ever.

[Ilia](#): It's really hard to get to the audience when you're all attention into the cap! Either the cap or the audience – it's just a different program. There was no thought it saying "I'm gonna do an introverted program," I wasn't really on concentrating on that, it just ended up that's what happened.

From [Leslie \(Jagrbure68\)](#): Iliushka!!! YOU'RE THE GREATEST!!! What cool things are you doing this summer? Anything fun? Working on a new movie or programs? Love ya!! Leslie



Courtesy: Ilia Kulik

*Plummeting toward the earth  
or practicing your  
backhand – which would  
you choose?*

[Ilia](#): Skydiving...yeah, maybe I'll go once again, it just depends on the right company -- it's boring to go by yourself. If I'll find some more people who are willing to do it, I will certainly go because it's hard to find those people who are really willing to go skydive! I'm playing a lot of tennis actually, I'm really into it...playing in a little league in my club. 4.0 League, it's like a level for tennis. It's not a ranking, but it's like a level. I had a couple of lessons, but I'm just enjoying playing.

# The Last Word

(inspired by a true VHS tape)

By Madley Katarungan

## ACT ONE

INT. – SANTA MONICA LOEW'S BEACH HOTEL – BALCONY – SUNSET

ILIA, 21, a tall Russian man with shaggy blond hair, jokes with the 4-5 WOMEN surrounding him at a party in his honor. He takes another sip of wine as MADLEY, a Filipino-American woman, 38, aims a video camera at him.

MADLEY

Say something, Ilia, please.  
To your Krew.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE

His FANS and their computers: an American executive at the office, two Japanese students at school, a Brazilian at home in pajamas, a French redhead in the kitchen.

ON ILIA

through the video camera lens. His mind is elsewhere.

ILIA

I said everything, I already said  
everything. There is nothing to say.

Madley keeps the camera on his face. On his pensive gaze, we...

CUT TO:

TV CLIPS

[Entertainment Tonight](#) – Ilia (smiling): "...packages, emails, phone calls... from the ladies!"

[CBS News, Nagano interview](#) – Ilia: "I just want to say thanks, thanks to everyone in Marlborough and Moscow..."

[Fox News in Orlando, Florida](#) – Ilia receiving Krew gift from Cara. Ilia: "...such great fans..."

[Olympics, Golden Gala, Champions On Ice](#) – Ilia in "Rhapsody in Blue" costume: smiling, bowing, being rained on with flowers, blowing kisses to the crowd, kissing young girl on the boards and said girl going crazy.

[The Rosie O'Donnell Show](#) – Ilia being introduced, fans screaming, Ilia smiling and waving, kissing Rosie, fans scream more. And finally:

[Leah's L.A. Party tape](#) (only minutes before) – Ilia walking in to great applause: being toasted and given a "giraffe" shirt and a website, being squished (and laughing) for a group photo surrounded by his admirers...

BACK TO ILIA

As he looks up, directly to the camera:

ILIA

There is too much to say.

His words hang in the air as Madley turns the camera off. They smile and move on to meet his fans at the next table.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(To be written)

*Madley Katarungan is a playwright from Burbank, California. She works as a writers' assistant on "Xena: Warrior Princess" and "Cleopatra 2525" and is currently in her second year as President of Kulik's Krew.*